

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
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People: A good quality of life for all of our residents

New Gas Collection System at Feniscowles former landfill site

The Council is responsible for managing the former landfill site at Feniscowles. Historic landfill sites often produce gases, including methane, and this gas is normally collected and dealt with so that it causes no harm.

The gas collection system at Feniscowles was known to be in need of repair, and this work has now been completed. The successful commissioning of the new system on 14th November was the culmination of two years' intensive work for members of the Environmental Protection Team.

Waste and Recycling

Waste sent to landfill or for energy from waste treatment within the borough has dropped by approximately 5% to date this year, which is a positive for the Council and the Borough. The new contract with Suez for the disposal of the Council's residual waste commences in April 2020, with Suez required to divert at least 70% of the waste away from landfill to an energy from waste solution.

The level of contamination in the recycling bins was averaging 60 tonnes per week, but since the efforts in tackling contamination have started in August, we have seen the contamination levels reduce to 22 tonnes per week, whilst at the same time seeing the recycling tonnages slightly increase to over 190 tonnes per week.

The Council's Waste Programme Board has received regular updates on the progress being made to develop a recycling and waste minimisation campaign in 2020. The campaign will help residents to better understand recycling and reduce the amount of wastage they produce e.g. the average household is wasting over £70 per month on food which ends up in the bin.

Annual Air Quality Status Report

Every year the Council is required to submit an Annual Status Report (ASR) for air quality compliance to DEFRA. The report details air quality monitoring results, progress against Air Quality Management Area action plans, and describes how data has been interpreted to get final results. DEFRA review the results to ensure that the methodology for calculating results is sound, and that progress against objectives is satisfactory.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Annual Status Report was submitted in October 2019, and DEFRA has accepted the report with no recommendations. Describing the report as well structured and detailed, they commended the Council on its second year of compliance with the air quality objectives for NO₂ across their monitoring network, and are encouraged it to continue to implement their air quality strategy to ensure continued compliance. These comments reassure us that our air quality monitoring regime is sound.

Place: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit

Your Call

The volunteer, community litter pickers have continued to increase, with the latest number of volunteers at 1,216. The previous work on developing community clean up events has now seen the community litter picking volunteers take the lead themselves in organising events, as they have the equipment and the communication routes to arrange for the collected materials to be removed. This means there are less Council organised community clean up events, but considerably more community led and organised events.

Regular newsletters are provided to the registered volunteers to help them in their efforts in helping to keep the borough clean. The Council has also recently asked the registered volunteers for their interest in becoming recycling ambassadors, to assist with increasing recycling within the borough.

Council: Delivered by a strong and resilient council

Shisha Bar Prosecution

The owners of a shisha bar on Barton Street, Blackburn have been fined £2,860 with additional costs awarded to the Council of £1,100 for allowing smoking in an enclosed space. The two directors of the business pleaded guilty to offences witnessed by Public Protection staff in March.

When the premises first opened, the premises complied with the requirements of smoke free legislation, but subsequent building works had made the business enclosed. Advice and information provided to the defendants during previous visits had not been heeded and so a decision to enforce was taken. Officers carried out an inspection visit and found a number of people smoking shisha pipes in the enclosed area.

The prosecution demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to dealing with shisha premises, which fail to comply with the law.

Waste Enforcement

The Council's Enviro-Crime and legal teams have taken a number of cases recently to court, with successful prosecutions of six people and two companies in court in December for offences ranging from dumping rubbish in back yards, to traders leaving waste on land.

Those prosecuted were made to pay penalties totalling £5,000, with many of the residents charged in their absence.